

VIETNAM COURIER

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South Viet Nam

* NEW SHELLING OF SAIGON: TARGETS IN ADMINISTRATIVE QUARTERS AND HARBOUR HIT

* P.L.A.F. CONTINUE HAMMERING AT THE ENEMY IN TAY NINH, DUC LAP AND COASTAL PROVIN- CES IN CENTRAL TRUNG BO WHERE A SEVENTH ENEMY BATTALION WAS WIPED OUT

* The P.L.A.F. Invest Thuong Duc,
Southwest of Da Nang.

* 14 Cargo-Boats, Tankers, Patrol-
Boats and Barges Between Saigon
and the Sea and 30 Other Craft
in Ben Tre Province Sunk or Burnt.



P.L.A.F. men in action

North Viet Nam

IN SEPTEMBER

63 U.S. Planes Downed, Many U.S. Pilots Captured

A daily average of 2 American aircraft was downed in September (11 in the first three days of the month), by North Viet Nam gunners, army-men and militiamen.

Quang Binh province topped the list with 22 planes grounded: Vinh Linh area, on the 17th parallel bagged 16 aircraft and Nghe An province 15 in the same month.

On September 11, within two minutes A.A. batteries in Quang Binh brought down two Phantoms. The rural

militia of that province recorded 5 kills, one of which on September 10 by 24 rounds of machine guns. The total of U.S. planes knocked out of the Quang Binh sky by the militia now runs to 97.

With 6 F-4s planes downed in September, Vinh Linh holds the record of spy-planes shot down.

In addition, in the same month the coastal defence of North Viet Nam twice hit war vessels from the Seventh Fleet.

Up to October 2, 1968

3.195 U.S. Aircraft Were Downed

U.S. Distortion of Truth Only Brings Out the Justice of South Viet Nam People's Cause

A Gial Phong Press Agency commentary

Of late, at the official talks in Paris between the representative of the D.R.V.N. Government and that of the U.S. Government and elsewhere the Johnson clique exalted itself to misrepresent the just resistance war of the South Vietnamese people against the U.S. aggression, for national salvation, and heaped cynical slanders on the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation. The U.S. ruling circles are continuing their old trick of making white black in an attempt to green their crime of aggression and deceive the American people and world public opinion. However, the aggressive, stubborn, brutal and perfidious nature of Johnson and company have been made more transparent by their own absurd contentions and stubborn attitude in all the past 23 sessions of the Paris talks and their war intensification in both North and South Viet Nam.

It is common knowledge that since the signing of the Geneva Agreements on Viet Nam, the U.S. imperialists have been pursuing the most

brutal policy of aggression unparalleled in history against the South Vietnamese people by launching first an armed intervention, then a "special war" and now a local war. They have deployed a huge aggressive machine composed of 1,200,000 U.S. puppet and satellite troops in a war on a half of Viet Nam with a 14 million population. They have been using most up-to-date war means including toxic chemicals, poison gas, napalm, phosphorus bombs and B-52 bombers and applying most barbarous methods of terror and massacre to subdue the South Vietnamese people, impose on them the U.S. neo-colonialist rule, turn South Viet Nam into an American colony and military base and prolong the partition of Viet Nam.

To oppose aggression and oppression is a sacred and imprescriptible right of any people. The American people themselves rose up against the British colonialists for independence and freedom. For a people like the Vietnamese who have a long tradition of indomitable struggle against foreign aggression for national salvation and who have never accepted slavery, there is no alternative but to unite and struggle persistently against U.S. aggression to save their country and their homes. The war of resistance which the South Vietnamese people have been conducting against U.S. aggression is precisely the continuation, of the glorious age-old history of the Vietnamese people against foreign aggression that is also the continuation at a higher level and with great creativity, the Vietnamese people's traditional love for independence and freedom.

(Continued page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

The people's revolutionary power has been in the making in almost all hamlets and

Concerning the allegation made by the U.S. representative at the previous session that the Vietnamese people and the D.R.V.N. Government were challenging international law and the norms of international behav-

heavier defeats. The Vietnamese people as a whole, in the North as well as in the South, are determined, no matter what may be the cost, to wrest back real independence and peace."

by TA OUANG BUI

Minister of Higher and Middle Vocational Education

been set up, from central down to the local level. At the centre, there are groups of technical and professional schools; regional establishments include teachers' training schools, medical, engineering and agricultural schools.

1. A decisive factor in raising the quality of the training over the past years has been the persevering efforts to link the school closely with life, production and combat. This is the fundamental spirit underlying the re-orientation of education, and also the gist of the Viet Nam Workers'

In face of difficulties born of war time conditions, teachers and students have developed their spirit of self-reliance and built laboratories and designed models, in keeping with the evacuation and dispersion of their establishments. The teachers have upheld the spirit of selflessly serving

3. Another factor of great importance for the quality of all-sided training is the organization of the school. The decisive element is to build a strong Party organization to ensure all-sided and absolute leadership by the school's Party committee as regard all school work. The role of such mass organizations as the trade-union and the Labour Youth should be promoted. Constant attention has been paid to the mobilization of all forces within the school with a view to organizing life and participating in the management of all school activities.

THE mingling to maturity of higher and secondary vocational education over the past years is due to the resolve shown by cadres, teachers and students in carrying into effect, in a creative manner and with great success, the line and policies of the Viet Nam Workers' Party concerning the training and fostering of scientific, technical and economic management cadres. The school has thus actively contributed to supplying the revolution with cadres for all-sided building and development in agriculture, industry, culture, education, and national defence.

rights. If the United States puts off the unconditional halt of the bombing and all other acts of war against the D.R.V.N. it will be held responsible for the Paris conversations' lack of progress. If the United States is bent on pursuing its war of aggression, it will only sustain heavier defeats. The Vietnamese people as a whole, in the North as well as in the South, are determined, no matter what may be the cost, to wrest back real independence and peace."

VIET NAM COURIER

MORE U.S. CRIMES IN BOTH PARTS OF VIET NAM

AT the current Paris talks between the representatives of the D.R.V.N. government and that of the U.S. government, Harriman and Vance uttered such bombastic exhortations as "Stop this senseless slaughter!" and "Join with us in steps to reduce the level of violence." "We remain ready to create conditions of peace," "We are prepared to go to bring peace," etc., etc. But the U.S. government and its troops' deeds in Saigon proved that the calls were sheer double-talk.

British and French Peace-Fighters Keep Day of Solidarity with Viet Nam

A day of solidarity with the Vietnamese people was observed on Sept. 22 at Boulogne-sur-mer, a town in northern France.

It was sponsored by the British Council for Peace in Viet Nam which had launched a campaign for the formation of a delegation of the British people to meet the Vietnamese representatives at the D.R.V.N.—U.S. talks, after the British government refused entry visas to the latter.

In response to this initiative, the Kent branch of the Peace in Vietnam Council and the Pas-de-Calais branch of the French Peace Council decided to organize a day of solidarity with Viet Nam.

Among the 800 British delegates to the solidarity rally were Jack Woddis, member of the Political Bureau of the British Communist Party Central Committee, Lord Brockway, Chairman of the British Council for Peace in Viet Nam, and C. Jenkins, Secretary General of the British Union of Scientific and Technical Staffs. The French delegation included Charles Jourdain, member of the French National Council of the Peace Movement, and Raymond, Central Committee member of the French Communist Party.

The Vietnamese delegates included Ambassador Ha Van Lau who represented Minister of State Xuan Thuy, chief negotiator of the D.R.V.N. Government at the Paris talks.

Taking the floor on the occasion, C. Jenkins said: "Viet Nam belongs to the Vietnamese. We recognize this and recognize you as the true representatives of the

WAR OBEDIENTLY STEPPED UP BY U.S. GOVERNMENT

On September 20, 1968, the battleship *USS Jersey* was sent to the Bac Bo Gulf to perpetrate crime against civilians in the southern part of the D.R.V.N. together with other units of the Seventh Fleet. The American spokesman in Saigon boasted that this 36,000-ton vessel was the most powerful in the U.S. Navy, equipped with 16-inch guns which could fire 2,700-lb shells 33 miles off and that the quantity of

shells fired by a few minutes by 9 of its cannons equalled half a B21 bomber. Prior to the commissioning of that battleship, on September 17, under pressure from the U.S., the Australian Navy had let it be known that its destroyer *Pyth* would leave Sydney on September 19 for the Bac Bo Gulf to replace the *Hobart* heavily damaged by mistake by the U.S.A.F. in mid-June 1968.

On September 4, General Mac Connell, commanding the U.S.A.F., declared that the U.S.A.F. had three pieces of which had been downed in Viet Nam—would operate again in the sky of the D.R.V.N.

Most remarkable was the fact that the U.S. Engineering Battalion No. 116 just called up five months ago was sent on Sept. 13 to South Viet Nam. This illustrated the difficulties encountered by U.S. authorities in finding cannon-fodder for the Viet Nam war and the big haste with which they were sending raw recruits to Viet Nam.

Vietnamese people."

He handed to Ambassador Ha Van Lau a copy of the statement of the British Council for Peace in Viet Nam which had launched a campaign for the formation of a delegation of the British people to meet the Vietnamese representatives at the D.R.V.N.—U.S. talks, after the British government refused entry visas to the latter.

On behalf of the French peace militants, Charles Jourdain, who had visited Viet Nam, announced the U.S. imperialist's genocidal crimes in Viet Nam. Referring to the Paris talks, he made it clear that the present standstill of the talks was due to the fact that the U.S. still refused to stop the bombing and all other acts of war against the D.R.V.N. He pointed out that it was the duty of the world's people to press on the U.S. such a course of action.

Speaking at the rally, Ambassador Ha Van Lau recalled the process of the U.S. wrecking the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Viet Nam and of U.S. war of aggression against Viet Nam.

He denounced the U.S. government's willingness at the Paris conversations and criticized the British government's support of U.S. aggression in Viet Nam.

ambassador Ha Van Lau expressed thanks to the British and French peoples for their support to the struggle of the Vietnamese people, stressing that it was a great inspiration for them.

was much more heinous.

Another monstrous crime of the Americans in South Viet Nam was committed from Sept. 3 to 8, when they took advantage of the big flood in the provinces of Quang Tri and Thua Thien to kill many people, destroy their crops and loot their property. In three villages of Pho Thach district, when the waters were rising and submerging even roofs of houses and tops of trees, dozens of amphibious cars rushed in while 48 *choppers* circled overhead firing down like hell. In Hong Tra district during the flood, enemy helicopters strangled the people busily harvesting their crops or salvaging their belongings. In a locality near Hue city, the enemy tried to account the difficulties caused by floods and rounded up 300 victims of the disaster.

In Tay-Ninh province on Sept. 6, the *Cau Sat* pagoda was attacked from the sky which was reminiscent to the *Cao Dai* followers of the bombings of their Holy See on August 18, 19, 20 and 26, 1968. It is to be recalled that in the raid on August 26, 23 people were killed and 12 others injured. On August 31, 1968, the U.S. air raids had amounted to 75 per day in the first quarters of 1968. Now they rose to 115 in April, 151 in May, 179 in June, over 200 in July, 200 in August and 212 in only the first half of September. This does not include naval attacks committed by the U.S. specialists and their henchmen in September was the massacre of over 350 civilians at Long Thanh townlet, 30km east of Saigon, on the Saigon-Vung Tau highway.

On the night of Sept. 22, American planes destroyed Long Thanh with bombs, rockets, napalm, incendiary and flame-throwers. Cannon from Nuoc Trong base also pounded it. This resulted in 77 casualties including whole families of puppet troops and civil servants of the puppet administration. On Sept. 3, people from other localities were denied entry into the area to rescue the victims, with a view to concealing the crime and to shifting the blame for this killing onto the Liberation fighters. The survivors at Long Thanh said that the Liberation soldiers could not possibly commit such a crime from the air. People from Nuoc Trong base also affirmed that American ordnance pieces there booming for ten hours running in the night were responsible for the death of the 350 Long Thanh people. Compared with the destruction by armoured vehicles of Tra Thanh village, Bang Long province, 90 km north of Saigon, on August 19, the massacre at Long Thanh

bombed dyke No 42 at Nam Dan, the dyke at Hung Pha and many dams and sluices in Nghe An province. In the first locality, they blasted away 800 cum. of earth, and in the second they wrecked a portion of dyke. As the people were mending the dykes, they came back and inflicted on them over 30 casualties.

Another crime of the aggressors was the intensified use of B32 strategic bombers. On Sept. 17 and 20, these planes flew 64 sorties and dropped 1,900 tons of bombs on four villages in Vinh Linh area, killing and wounding 28 people despite a system of local shelters.

From April 1968 onwards, the enemy has been concentrating his strikes on the night of Tet, continued well beyond Tet, for the whole month, for the entire spring. Never had Saigon witnessed such a night: dozens, hundreds of G.I. bodies, trucks, tanks and armoured cars—not one or two, but five, ten at a time—set afire or blown up.

It was as though Saigon were reliving the days of the August 1945 Revolution, when in many districts puppet flags littered the ground like dead leaves in autumn, for our patriots and fighters to come to Viet Nam.

SAIGON'S dreams had come true: now the people could hunt down cruel agents of the enemy, try them in the courts and arrest the founders of revolutionary power in many wards, precincts and hamlets.

Never before had Saigon seen a close view of American demons at their prey: their presence had so far been associated with death, hunger, shipwreck, deprivation at most with police round-ups, jails crammed with prisoners; they had reserved death and destruction for far-away places: Cu Chi Zone D, the Mekong delta, the High Plateau, the area close to the demarcation line.

SAIGON TEACH-IN CONDEMNS U.S. AGGRESSION

WHY we want peace? was the theme of a teach-in held on September 8 at the headquarters of the Saigon Students' Union and attended by more than 300 intellectuals, students, clergymen and Buddhist priests.

According to a report from Saigon, University Professor Ly Chanh Trung, one of the speakers, openly voiced the Saigon intellectuals' profound indignation at the U.S. crime of aggression, and condemned U.S. flooding of all democratic liberties in South Viet Nam.

He said: "As a Vietnamese, I can no longer remain indifferent to the destruction

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Our True Saigon

Editor's note.—Among those who have tried to depict the extraordinary heroism of P.L.A.F. men during their attacks on Saigon and the intelligence and resourcefulness shown by the city people in helping them destroy the enemy, besides the well-known writer of the N.P.F., there have been many honest authors by the title itself.

The following has been published in the revised *Nguyen Viet*, organ of the Saigon "Writers and Artists for Democracy and Peace", in its issue of May 1968.

SAIGON on former occasions had been fired and dazed by these tremendous explosions which wrecked the aircraft carrier *Carr*, the American Embassy, the Brink, Caravelle and Victoria hotels, the puppet General Police Headquarters, the Tan Son Nhut airfield, the Independence Palace, and Thong Nhat avenue during military parades.

But nothing equals the enthusiasm and surprise which came to her during the recent period. The sound of gunfire which erupted on the night of Tet, continued well beyond Tet, for the whole month, for the entire spring. Never had Saigon witnessed such a night: dozens, hundreds of G.I. bodies, trucks, tanks and armoured cars—not one or two, but five, ten at a time—set afire or blown up.

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batant. The enemy had thought P.L.A.F. units were solely composed of highly-trained Special Task groups, Northern regulars, or main-force Liberation troops. But in fact you are made up of masses of patriots from right inside Saigon who, within a matter of hours, have achieved tremendous feats.

The whole pyreous machine of the enemy had been put in motion with a view to nullifying the image of P.L.A.F. combatants, who were represented as ravenous plunderers or pitiful country bumpkins.

But their true image has remained engraved in the minds of the Saigon people, who have respect for them all their love and affection, who stand ready at all times to devote all they have, even their lives, to protect them.

Let me recall here stories known to all Saigon people.

A P.L.A.F. unit operating in a city block was looking for night quarters. Hardly had a man knocked on a door when another not far away opened, a modest thatched-roof cottage. A woman called to him, inviting him in. As he came up to her she asked aloud, "Are you from the police, Mister? Want to search my house?" The P.L.A.F. man whispered, "No we are P.L.A.F. troops." But the woman knew he was in, smiled and said, "We know, we know. We've been expecting you all this time. Please call your comrades in."

Such warm welcomes were extended to P.L.A.F. men and women everywhere, in humble cottages and also in many luxurious villas. The unit mentioned above moved to another city district the following night. It was one of the wealthy-looking buildings. The men knocked on a door, rather diffidently. It slowly opened. A woman asked them to come in, then said right away, "One of my sons, a Navy man, is home on furlough."

The P.L.A.F. unit told her and other members of her family not to worry. That night a light broke out. The hosts, who were in the fabrics business, told the revolutionary troops to use their stocks

of goods to build combat positions. As the fight continued, they moved out of the area when morning came, but the Navy man volunteered to stay and fight by the side of the P.L.A.F. men. So did another Navy man, his friend and neighbor, also home on leave.

Another P.L.A.F. unit found itself in a residential sector, mostly inhabited by families of puppet officials and officers. An engagement occurred that night, with U.S. puppet troops trying to surround them. All doors remained closed. Yet when dawn broke, the people sneaked out, bringing coffee and breakfast to the revolutionaries. The wounded were carried inside and given proper care.

Towards noon, the P.L.A.F. unit withdrew, leaving behind a few snipers. The enemy ordered everybody out, for them to come in and "annihilate Viet Cong". As the people started moving out of the block, two snipers, having used up all their ammunition, stood hesitantly by. Immediately, several air strikes hit the area, sending a stream of "refugees" made up of puppet officials' families and put babies into their arms. The P.L.A.F. women thus safely made their way out.

Such is our Saigon, our true Saigon, the Saigon of rich and poor quarters, the Saigon of the girl water-carrier, of the woman in the humble thatched cottage, and also of that draper's family. Among the revolutionaries who streamed into Saigon were many of its former inhabitants.

Such is our Saigon. For many years, the Saigon of the riftriff spawned by the French colonialist regime. Then that old wizard in a gaudy hat with fifty stars came and rode roughshod on our city. But the sound of the Tet gunfire has conjured away all demons from Saigon, restoring it to its true state: a precious pearl.

* Labouring people's quarters heavily damaged by U.S. bombing and strafing.



The fuel depot at Nha Be (Saigon) after being hit by P.L.A.F. men.

A poor city girl, who earned a living carrying water, begged a P.L.A.F. unit to let her help them in any way they wanted. She was cooking, building roadblocks, keeping watch, fighting, carrying stretchers... Later, during the Tet night, she remained extremely intelligent and resourceful combatant.

ON THE LARGE SOUTHERN FRONT

Military Operations

DURING last week, the P.L.A.F. continued to attack the enemy in many of its operations. *Gia Phong* Press Agency reported. On September 29, Saigon was again pounded by P.L.A.F. artillery. On September 26, 27, and 28 the patriots attacked at least 10 enemy targets including 3 posts in Tay Ninh province which sustained the "most violent bombardment in the war" (2,000 shells according to Western agencies), and a coup de main was mounted on the U.S. vehicle park in Cholon, Saigon twin city.

The P.L.A.F. were very active in Thuong Duc region, 40km southwest of Da Nang, where many posts were overrun and a big enemy's force intercepted. The coastal provinces of Central Trung Bu remained the site of fierce fighting where a puppet battalion was wiped out near Qui Nhon.

In the Mekong delta, Ben Tre province distinguished itself again with the destruction of 6 U.S. war vessels on September 24 and 25.

SAIGON AREA:

— The city was newly bombed on September 29.
— 10 ships and 4 barges (including 2 10,000-ton ships) sunk or damaged southeast of Saigon.

— Three important enemy posts in Tay Ninh province heavily plastered by P.L.A.F. artillery.

On September 29, many shells fired by the P.L.A.F. hit various targets in Saigon. *Gia Phong* Press Agency said: in the district of Thieu's residence and the puppet National Assembly building and the harbour of the old district.

trict where many storehouses were hit. The previous day in a district of Cholon, a self-defence unit had stormed a military vehicle park and destroyed three vehicles. American sources revealed.

Besides between Saigon and the sea, in the network of waterways formed by the Dong Nai, the Dong Tranh and Long Tau, 10 ships and 4 barges, including a tanker and a cargo-boat of 10,000 tons each, were damaged or sunk 17-30 kilometres southeast of the city within 10 days beginning September 2.

Northwest of Saigon, in Tay Ninh province, the P.L.A.F. on September 26 struck at three enemy posts along the Ca Tam 110 km from Saigon. Western agencies

reported that 2,000 shells had been slung at the enemy targets, making this the "most violent bombardment in the war". The previous night, near Ca Tam, the patriots had wiped out a Ranger Company and a signal platoon. Another American company met the same fate on September 22 in an ambush 16km northeast of Tay Ninh, on the road to Ca Tam.

Thus within the last six weeks, Tay Ninh remained the most disastrous battlefield for the Yankees who lost a daily average of 400 men, about 40 vehicles, 4 cannons or mortars and 2 planes or helicopters.

CENTRAL TRUNG BU:

Vain efforts of the enemy to clear Thuong Duc, southwest of Da Nang, invested by the P.L.A.F. since September 28, 1968.

— A puppet battalion wiped out in Qui Nhon region.

GIA PHONG Press Agency reported that on September 28, the P.L.A.F. had assaulted many enemy posts at Thuong Duc

a district capital and a sub-sector C.P. commanding an important valley 40 km southwest of Da Nang. After a 5 minutes' engagement, two outposts fell to the hands of the patriotic forces, followed a few hours later by another post. Meanwhile, the airfield came under fire and the urban centre was stormed by patriotic infantrymen.

All enemy counter-attacks were repelled, some after fierce hand-to-hand fights. The following days, despite massive intervention of aircraft (B-52s, fighter-bombers and armed helicopters) the P.L.A.F. harassed enemy positions day and night, while the villages in the periphery of the town were under the people's control. On October 1, a U.S. marine battalion of Regiment 3 belittled from Saigon to try and clear the place was besieged and decimated and forced to call for help. The battle is still raging in this sector.

Near Tam Ky provincial capital, an American armoured column was intercepted on September 24. 4 tanks were destroyed, many others damaged, and 2 choppers downed. The same day, near Thien Phuoc 22 km south southwest of Tam Ky, 6 tanks (4 of 2000 and 2 of 1000) and about one hundred enemy soldiers put out of action. Six kilometres northwest of Chu Lai base, on the night of September 28, the P.L.A.F. wiped out an American artillery company and destroyed 8 105mm and 155mm cannons.

In An Dinh, 10km southwest of Quang Ngai town, the patriotic forces completely wrote off the muster-roll on September 26 a puppet company and seized all its arms and ammunition.

people were arguing impatiently. About a hundred had volunteered to join the reinforcements for Saigon, but more were asking to go. A quota of 2000 had been entered for Ap Gong and Duc Hoa people wishing to enlist in the district armed forces, but this was far from enough. When the news was jumped for joy, but others loudly protested that they were every bit as good. The military cadre of Ap Gong talked himself hoarse calling on people to "be reasonable, fair-minded, and display class solidarity". Everybody gave vigorous approval, but this didn't stop the disputes and scuffles over who should get the guns next.

But there was the first to be issued a rifle, for her husband had recently been killed by the enemy. Uncle Ton said she had made a martyr of a 82-mm. mortar crew, for an enemy shell from Hau Nghia had knocked down his cattle shed. Tu Diu had to yield his submachinegun to Sister Lam, for his wife had

Near Qui Nhon, capital of Binh Dinh province, in the engagement unfolding on September 22, 23 and 24 southwest of Phu My, the enemy lost a battalion of Italian 4, Regiment 3, puppet Division 22) and 350 men including the Battalion commander. It was the seventh battalion of the enemy wiped out within a month in Central Trung Bu. killed, wounded or captured 16,700 adverse troops, put out of action 6 enemy battalions, and decimated a regiment, a multi-battalion unit and 9 battalions. Meanwhile the patriotic forces destroyed, damaged or downed 125 planes and helicopters and 400 vehicles including 170 armoured vehicles, destroyed 248 camps in which civilians were concentrated and liberated 118,000 people.

OTHER THEATRES OF OPERATIONS:

— 30 ships sunk or burnt in Ben Tre province (Mekong delta).

— In Duc Lac sector: 4 American companies wiped out or decimated in the last week of September.

North of Quang Tri province, 3,550 enemy soldiers put out of action in 25 days.

FROM September 14 to 19, a wave of generalized attacks was launched by the P.L.A.F. on the 7 provinces in the Mekong delta in which the patriots had 2,000 men put out of action (nearly 1,000 GIs), 21 ships burnt or sunk and 5 aircraft downed or destroyed. *Gia Phong* Press Agency reported.

(Continued page 7)

IN A HAMLET CLOSE TO SAIGON

STANDING on the bank of the Van Co River, I could see flames floating in the sky over Saigon, Hiep Hoa, Hau Nghia, Duc Hoa, Ben Luc, Yau An and other places. Projectiles of all calibres were using hurled by our troops on American bases. On the ground, although the season had not come yet for the dry stubble to be burned, the glow of big bonfires was reflected on the river. The light made it possible for me to recognise Ap Gong, a small hamlet in Long An province, and share its people's immense joy.

At dusk the noise had begun: bamboo taccas, tin cans, empty napalm containers... resounded over the vast sugar cane fields, mingled with the hubbub of people calling, running, and shouting through megaphones. If a man would stand still and listen to the megaphones, he would be able to get an idea of the battle going on in the Gieng and the ebullient revolutionary atmosphere prevailing there. An enemy military post stood less than half a kilometre away; yet the megaphones went right on urging the people to the places where bonfires were tearing off to shreds the darkness along highways 8 and 10. There, since nightfall, the people of Ap Gong were firing along balls of cooked rice, bamboo baskets, picks and shov-

els, dynamite charges, and bomb duds, had set to destroy enemy communications. Each bonfire marked a stretch of road being cut to pieces. At dusk, a few rifle shots had been heard, but this did not last very long. A megaphone recounted what had happened: the rounds had been fired by a platoon of puppet soldiers headed by a man named Nui. Nui's wife was among the road destroyers. Without a word, she stepped out, came right up to Nui and stood defiantly with arms akimbo facing her husband's gun muzzle. Nui eventually gave up, and soon another bonfire was lit.

Walking along the road I remembered the first resistance put up by the Ap Gong people in 1958 to protect their sugar cane fields against enemy destruction. Now as then, the fields stretched out in immense expanses, dotted with small trees. Though the cuts made in the banks of the canals, flowed water from the Van Co river. There I saw flickering keris lights, and heard the noise of machetes working on hard wood. Some people were working, apparently old folks. Communist? I saw white goats and wrinkled foreheads, and the people of Ap Gong were in their elderly men and women were building bridges across canals

and cuts in the roads, for their "sons" in the Liberation Army to move more quickly in the direction of Saigon. Spreading rice husks on the mud to make the paths less slippery and throwing bridges across road gaps and canals, such was the kind of job devolved upon the "whitewashed army". Old people were crowding in to volunteer for revolutionary jobs, and to set up "offices" had to be so set up to distribute tasks. An elderly woman who was flourishing in the water trying to put up a pillar of a bridge said to another, "It took me a great deal of talking to convince Yi, the Front secretary, that I am perfectly fit for work. Ah, how lucky the young people are! They don't have to beg for assignments! They are given guns and plenty of opportunities to fight the Yanks!"

That night, before the attack on the enemy sector of Hau Nghia, I took a stroll along the canals, crossed the newly-built bridges, heading in the direction of Saigon. The flames in the sky over the city had become even denser. Enemy artillery was firing on the outskirts. Three hundred shells fell on the territory of Ap Gong; its "share of fire." Don't have to beg for assignments! They are given guns and plenty of opportunities to fight the Yanks!"